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ABSTRACT

The resource teacher's role in providing inservice training to regular educators is examined. The paper then describes an Action Plan Approach in which regular education teachers and the resource room teacher jointly identify problems commonly associated with mainstreaming and utilize combined efforts to resolve the problem. The advantages to the Action Plan Approach include shared responsibilities, vested interest by all involved, and developed materials/strategies that facilitate successful mainstreaming. The approach is broken down according to problem identification processes, goal specifications, and additional resources. (Author/CL)

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An Action Plan Approach to Inservice Training

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Running head: INSERVICE TRAINING

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Abstract

The roles the resource room teacher should take in facilitating successful mainstreaming include being a facilitator between special and regular education teachers and consultant to other ancillary personnel including parents. Wiederholt, et al. (1978) has stated that there are too few people in the schools who are trained or funded to provide direct specialized services to the many students who need help. Therefore, resource teachers, as consultants, can train teachers to serve those students who demonstrate learning problems. This article describes an Action Plan Approach in which regular education teachers and the resource room teacher jointly identify problems commonly associated with mainstreaming and utilize combined efforts to resolve the problem. The advantage to the Action Plan Approach include shared responsibilities, vested interest by all involved, and developed materials/strategies that facilitate successful mainstreaming.

An Action Plan Approach to

Inservice Training

The roles the resource room teacher should take in facilitating successful mainstreaming have been well described (Montgomery, 1978; Lewis, & Doorlag, 1983; Turnbull, & Schultz, 1984). In essence, the resource teacher's roles can be described as that of classroom teacher and facilitator between special and regular education, and consultant to other ancillary personnel, including parents.

According to Wiederholt, Hammill, & Brown (1978) "All resource teachers are expected to engage in a lot of continuing communication with other teachers in the school. Resource teachers who have demonstrated their competence by successfully teaching children and whom other teachers see as supportive, interested, and nonjudgemental probably will be consulted often by other teachers." Wiederholt, et al. further state that there are too few people in the schools who are trained or funded to provide direct specialized services to the many students who need help. Therefore, resource room teachers, as consultants, can train teachers to better serve those students who demonstrate learning problems.

The skills necessary to conduct inservice training differ

from that of classroom teaching where the teacher is primarily responsible for providing remediation in academic content areas on a one to one or small group basis. In inservice training the resource teacher takes on the role of an expert or authority not only in their field of special education but to a certain degree in the field of their colleagues. This role of inservicing peers can be, and often is, very intimidating to the resource teacher who has been trained to teach children as opposed to being an inservice leader for their peer group.

This article will describe an approach for providing inservice training that has been used successfully by the authors. It is an approach that is non-threatening to the resource teacher and regular educators. In effect, it is a shared responsibility rather than that of placing the resource teacher in total charge of being the change agent. Most importantly, the approach to be described greatly enhances the opportunities for maintaining the handicapped child in the regular classroom.

A major responsibility for conducting inservice training is to identify the needs of those to be served; traditionally that has been done through the use of a needs assessment instrument (Turnbull, Strickland, & Brantley, 1982). The preparation of a needs assessment instrument takes time to prepare, distribute, and

analyze. Often times several requests have to be made to have the instruments returned. An alternative to the needs assessment is Herron's Composite Theory (1982).

The Composite Theory assumes that children who fail in the mainstream or who are in danger of failing do so because of: (a) student behavior (academic/social); (b) peer behavior; and (c) teacher behavior. One could also add a fourth explanation and that would include a combination of the three behaviors.

Composite Theory Applied

In the first inservice meeting the resource room teacher would distribute a form (Table 1) that allows teachers to identify problems they associate with mainstreaming. Notice that this approach encourages active vs. passive participation in the inservice training. The identification of the problems should be done individually.

Upon the completion of the Composite Theory form the resource room teacher, as the facilitator, would list problems identified by teachers under each of the three categories provided. General discussion would be carried out at this time to identify some of the more commonly listed problems of maintaining handicapped students in the mainstream.

Table 1

Problems Identified by Regular Education Teachers Related to Mainstreaming

Student Behaviors (Academic/Social)	Peer Behavior	Teacher Behavior
Student reads below grade level; materials used are too difficult for child.	Peers tease mainstreamed child because of poor reading skills.	Teacher frustration; doesn't believe materials exist to help student.
Emotional outbursts caused by frustration.	View the child as "strange."	Teacher finds outbursts disruptive.
Difficulty taking notes.	Students get angry when they have to "wait" for mainstreamed student.	Teacher has to repeat directions and clarify an inordinate amount of time.

(table continues)

Student Behaviors (Academic/Social)	Peer Behavior	Teacher Behavior
Lack of social skills commensurate with placement.	Socially isolate handicapped student.	Teacher passively tolerates behavior of nonhandicapped student towards mainstreamed student.
Poor self image re academic abilities e.g., "I can't do the work."	View student as "slow."	Why is this student in my class?

Note. Examples taken from list compiled by teachers.

Prior to the next inservice meeting the resource teacher should analyze the information presented by the teachers on the Composite Theory form. The analysis of the information presented will provide the basis for future inservice. It is especially noteworthy to observe where regular education teachers place the onus of responsibility for successful mainstreaming, as this will pinpoint the problematic areas of maintaining the handicapped student in the regular classroom.

An effective approach to providing inservice training is to use the Composite Theory information as the basis for an action plan to address the problem(s) identified. It works best if the group selects one problem and works collectively to resolve it. Undertaking to solve too many problems at once leads to a very diffuse approach that seldom brings about positive outcome. The action plan is designed to bring about results. It should be reiterated that the action plan shares responsibility between the special and regular educator. This shared responsibility gives the regular educator a vested interest in problem solving while at the same time allowing the special educator to be a facilitator rather than a director who carries all of the responsibility for change.

Identification of Positive Forces

The most important force to identify and use would be the experiences and skills that each individual teacher has built up over an extended period of teaching. The special education teacher would seem to be in an excellent position as a catalyst, in drawing out information about materials and resources that individual teachers have used successfully with other students, or that they feel comfortable with using. It would be important for each team to "brainstorm" a list of resources/materials that are available or that could be reviewed by team members. The most important positive force that should be identified and accentuated right from the start is that all of the teachers on the team have useful information to share toward the goal realization.

Identification of Negative Forces

Just as the group should be aware of positive forces that serve as assets to problem solving there must also be an awareness of obstacles that can hinder/prevent the group efforts. Commonly found negative forces include:

1. Individual and Group Frustration/Complacency with Previous/Present Mainstreaming Efforts: in reality, much of group frustration/complacency would be linked logically to a number of individuals exhibiting their feeling(s) on a collective basis.

2. Time Constraints: this would include new regulations, deadlines, and demands placed on the classroom teacher, accompanied by little previous background/training and with little present support, while at the same time demanding responsibility/ time for the other 25-30 students in the same class.

3. Resources: a limited budget plus lack of information on possible materials, added to a non-existent or inflexible district policy on requisitions equals a frustrated teacher or one who feels that "mainstreaming won't work" or "I can't accomplish this with the present materials."

4. Previous Efforts: this would include past and present inservice sessions that are supposed to take care of "problems" - but that don't, or inservice sessions that are definitely not based on identified teacher needs. In a number of situations it means inadequate teacher preparation time, inflexibility in schedule for consultant meetings with special education teacher, an inadequate referral process, limited budget for materials, or a non-existent district or building budget/materials requisition policy.

Action Plan Rationale

The Action Plan is a positive attempt to address issues/ problems. It is the preferred alternative to "hand wringing,"

"procrastination" and the "I told you so" mentality.

The results of an Action Plan that can be anticipated are:

1. Problem identification
2. Goals and objectives established
3. Solutions proposed
4. Individual and team efforts exerted
5. Obstacles identified and overcome
6. Resolution of problem

What follows is a description of an Action Plan that addresses commonly experienced problems related to the selection and usage of materials. Groups of teachers (regular and special education) would have responsibility for developing the major components of a district wide Materials Guide (MG). Upon completion of this product, the different sections of the guide could be used directly by the teachers to assist them in solving a number of the problems related to materials selection, development, and use with special needs students. The Materials Guide could also serve as a valuable filing tool as information about new materials and related strategies become available. In addition, the various components of this guide could also serve as a basis for future teacher inservice sessions for the district that would, in all likelihood, be much more relevant to the faculty because of their involvement

in the development and use of the guide.

Formulation of an Action Plan:	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
A. Specific Problem Mentioned as a Major Concern by a High Percentage of Classroom Teachers at the Initial Inservice Meeting.	Heron's Composite Theory (1982)
1. Selection, Evaluation, and Adaptation of Materials.	
1.1 Classroom teachers are often unsure of what materials to use with various mainstreamed handicapped students.	Wiederholt, Brown, & Hammill (1983) Hammill, & Bartel (1982)
1.2 Classroom teachers often do not have access to information (descriptive/ evaluative) covering instructional materials outside of the ones they	Gall (1981)

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
are presently using and/or the publishers' catalogs that may be scattered around the school.	
1.3 The annual selection of materials is based primarily on individual budgets. There are not unlimited funds available in most school districts and the money is limited and many districts either do not provide a materials selection procedure, or a policy, if in effect, is overly restrictive.	Lewis, & Doorlag (1983)
1.4 The preservice training or many classroom teachers have largely ignored the	Gall (1981)

Formulation of an Action Plan		Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
	objective analysis and appraisal of curriculum materials.	
1.5	The materials that are in use in many classrooms could often be appropriate for many mainstreamed handicapped students if changes (adaptations/ modifications) were made in the content, presentation mode, and tasks required. Many teachers are unfamiliar with/unsure of adaptation/ modification procedures for instructional materials.	Lewis, & Doorlag (1983) Schulz, & Turnbull (1984)
1.6	Classroom teachers often do not have the training or the time to develop and use	Schulz, & Turnbull (1984) Lewis, & Doorlag (1983)

Formulation of an Action Plan		Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
	teacher made materials. However, limited budgets for the purchase of commercial materials added to the fact that some materials are inappropriate for some students or are unavailable mean that classroom teachers should consider teacher made materials as a practical and inexpensive alternative. In addition, many of the procedures employed to create materials may also be used to insure that present materials last longer (e.g., lamination).	
1.7	Many classroom teachers do	Lewis, & Doorlag (1983)

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
	not have a systematic procedure for the storage, organization, and retrieval of instructional materials for use in daily lesson and units with their students. Especially important for mainstreamed handicapped students is the fact that often when a teacher locates an idea for a commercial or teacher made material that has been used successfully with a handicapped group, there is often no place to store/ categorize the information and it becomes lost or forgotten.

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
B. Action Plan Goal Identification	
1. The classroom teachers and special education teachers will jointly develop, refine, and monitor a district Teaching Materials Guide for Successful Mainstreaming.	Meyen, et al. (1983) Meyen (1982) Turnbull, et al. (1983) Gall (1981)
2. This final product will be subdivided into sections and each section will be the specific responsibility of a group of four to six teachers (classroom, special education, support staff). Each team will develop a list of specific products that they will develop and a timeline for the completion of each, along with individual responsibilities. When each section is completed,	

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
that team will present their products to the rest of the teachers. All completed products, once presented, will be placed in a ringed notebook that will be given to all workshop participants. This can be added to as new materials and strategies for materials use are located. The use of this teaching guide and the monitoring of its usefulness and limitations by teachers and administrators could serve as a practical basis for future inservice sessions.	
3. Major Sections of the Materials Guide:	
3.1 Overview/Rationale/ Bibliography	

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
3.2 Information Sources for Instructional Materials (Access)	
3.3 Budget Process for Materials	
3.4 Analysis/Appraisal of Commercial Materials	
3.5 Adaptations/Modifications of Materials for Special Needs Students	
3.6 Development of Teacher Made Materials	
3.7 Teaching Resource Section (Annotated List)	
C. Additional Resources	
1. Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Computer Search Reprints. Each issue of the Exceptional Children journal outlines a list of curriculum/instructional	Council for Exceptional Children

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
guides for a wide variety of handicapped population in a number of different subject areas, at a variety of program levels. These guides are available at a minimal cost and contain a wealth of information regarding teaching resources and materials.	
2. Exceptional Children Education Resources (ECER). A monthly index which catalogs/categorizes journal articles, ERIC references, government documents, and books relating to exceptional populations at all levels/ subjects. Much information on teacher made/adapted materials can be found in many professional	

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy
education journals searched by ECER, while curriculum guide resources can be located using ERIC references identified in the same system.	
3. Mercer/Mercer (1981). Outlines and illustrates the development of a teacher file system for both commercial, adapted, and teacher made materials.	
4. Winston (1978). Outlined a number of relevant suggestions for educators in terms of a Materials Management System (MMS).	
5. National Information Center for Special Education Materials (NICSEM). A series of catalogs plus a computerized access system for commercial materials	

Formulation of an Action Plan	Source of Information/ Rationale for Strategy

used with handicapped populations; the information provided is descriptive and cross categorical/ levels.

6. Curriculum Review. Although specific special education materials are not identified except in special issues (October 1978) this quarterly resource describes and evaluates regular class (K-12) materials for all subject areas; the teacher can readily match characteristics of the materials with characteristics and needs of mainstreamed handicapped students.

Summary

The specific product developed through the team approach

would seem to be an excellent mechanism for the alleviation or elimination of the problems identified. This same process/product would do much to minimize or eliminate a number of the negative forces outlined. When one major problem is removed the results are often the elimination of a number of other negative forces, but at a minimum, it would seem to make it easier to target and deal with specific problems that educators face in attempting to implement successful mainstreaming programs.

The use of an Action Plan would help the resource room teacher to minimize the problems associated with mainstreaming and, therefore, be beneficial to the mainstreamed student and regular/special educators.

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